

Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

Christmas Issue

Volume 1, Issue 3

December 1992

The West End Tour 15th Annual

Candlelight Tour of Historic Homes

Saturday, December 5th 5-8 p.m.
Sunday, December 6th 2-7 p.m.

The Tom Cohoon House (c. 1922)

1005 Pennsylvania Ave. (Home of Dave and Pat Snyder)

The Darden-Sheffield Mansion (1914)

104 South Broad St. (Home of Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Die)

The William S. Holland House (c. 1900)

107 South Broad St. (Home of Joseph Riddick)

The John Lee House (c. 1920)

811 Gittings St. (Home of Ed and Carolyn Wood)
(Cider and cookies will be served at the Holland House)

BLOCK TICKETS - \$10.00 EACH
AVAILABLE AT ANY HOUSE ON TOUR DAY

There are a Limited number of Advance Tickets (\$15.00 each) available at Riddick's Folly 510 N. Main St. or The Willows, 800 W. Washington St. These Tickets include a Champagne Dessert Gala at the Darden - Sheffield Mansion at the closing of the Saturday Night Tour. Deadline December 3rd.

West End Churches Open Sunday, December 6

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Oxford United Methodist Church St. Mary's Catholic Church
601 West Washington Street 202 South Broad Street
West End Baptist Church
501 West Washington Street

(For a minimal charge, St. Mary's will offer desserts and beverages in their Parish Hall)
(Please wear low heel shoes on tour)

Museums Open Sunday, December 6

Riddicks Folly - 510 North Main St. 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Suffolk Museum - 118 Bosley Ave. 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Both museums are having a reception from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. to celebrate the opening of their joint exhibition, "We Gather Together".

West End Business

Former Chorey Motor Company - Presently The Willows Antiques and Penny Birdsong Interior Designs, 800 West Washington St. An interesting collection of "Things From The Past" as well as the Historical Society's publications; Emyle Jenkins' book, *Southern Christmas*; prints of the Court House, the Old City Market, and the 1907 Suffolk Map; also memberships to the SNHS for the 1993 year.

Forthcoming Event

Architectural historian **Calder Loth** will discuss how ancient building forms and details still shape the taste of today's Virginia homebuilders in a lecture titled "Where Did Your Home Come From?" in Suffolk on **Thursday, January 21, 1993**. His illustrated lecture will be presented at the **Suffolk Museum** beginning at **7:30 p.m.** Sponsored by **Suffolk Art League & Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society** the lecture is one of eight offered by a team of curators, educators and art historians under the auspices of the Museum's statewide affiliate program. The lecture is one of four about Virginia architecture presented in conjunction with the Virginia Museum exhibition "The Making of Virginia Architecture: Drawings and Models, 1719-1990," on view in Richmond from Nov. 10, 1992, to Jan. 3, 1993.

Loth is a senior architectural historian with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. He will use examples from the exhibition to demonstrate the enduring architectural styles evident in Virginia's homes and neighborhoods.

"The Making of Virginia Architecture" will investigate American architecture and architectural drawings in a survey of more than 100 works that represent Virginia's great building tradition. The designs selected which record the early structures of Williamsburg, document the buildings of Jefferson and the historical revivalists, and reveal the advances of the modern age illustrate the working methods and inspirations of some of America's finest architects, among them B.H. Latrobe, founder of the American architectural profession; Alexander Jackson Davis, the creator of romantic villas; the classicists McKim, Mead & White; the medievalist Ralph Adams Cram; and more recently, modernists such as Eero Saarinen and Michael Graves.

Loth is one of four curators working on the exhibition.

Additional information about the lecture may be obtained by telephoning Suffolk Art League office at 925-0448.

Note From the President

Hello everyone and a special welcome to our new members. May I remind you that our calendar year runs January through December. Do consider joining us for 1993 if you're not a member and please renew your membership when you receive notice in January if you are currently among our ranks.

September 17th was a special day for the SNHS. The program at St. Paul's Church featuring Emyle Jenkins, author of *Southern Christmas*, was well attended informative and lots of fun. The tables, decorated with arrangements of roses, hydrangea, fruit and greens, were laden with delicious treats served in antique silver on lovely linens. What a picture it created. Emyle Jenkins was

(continued inside see **President**)

Suffolk-Nansemond Historical Society

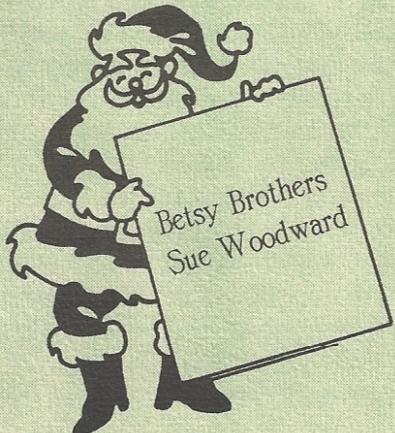
Officers 1992-93

President	Betsy Brothers 539-6312
Vice-President	Sue Woodward
Past President	Jim Moore
Corresponding Secretary ..	Gay Birdsong
Recording Secretary	Melissa Odom
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Historian	Marion Watson

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Membership ...	Mary Lawrence Harrell 539-4796
Ways and Means	Betty Ellison
Publications	Marion Watson
Hospitality	Vonnie Foreman
Christmas Candlelight Tour	Nancy Parr Sue Woodward
Design, Layout & Typesetting by Brookfield Publishing Company	
Sketches by Doug Naismith	
Printed by Gurley Press	

Contributing Editors for this
Christmas Issue:



President (cont)

a pure delight and her slide presentation and lecture was interesting and witty. How extremely fortunate we were that Mrs. Jenkins took a day out of her overtaxing schedule to promote the cause of our Historical Society. I thank all of you who attended and thank you also for helping the Society's treasury by purchasing Emyle's books.

I extend heartfelt thanks to Gay Birdsong, Betty Ellison, Vonnie Foreman, Webb Pinner, Mary Lawrence Harrell, Joyce Saecker, Irene Pinner and Janice Thomas and to the SIXTEEN wonderful cooks who provided the delicious goodies. Also we are very grateful to St. Paul's Episcopal Church for allowing us to use their beautiful facility.

Our 15th Annual Candlelight Tour had evolved into one of our biggest yet! We have been diligently working and anticipate a successful and exciting weekend. Working with the homeowners has been an added pleasure and we are extremely grateful to each of them. Folks, you're in for a rare treat, don't miss it!!

Sue Woodward, Nancy Parr and I wish to thank the following chairmen: Publicity, Karen Hill; Tickets, Anna D'Antonio; Signs and Parking, Kermit Hobbs; House Chairman, June March, Dixie Peachy, Joyce Saecker, Barbara Birdsong and Kim Mason. Also, a huge thank you to our talented decorators who will "deck the halls" and to the Saturday Night Gala Committee, and the many hostesses and ticket people! Without all of you, we could not have a tour.

The Chrysler Museum

Emyle Jenkins on A Southern Christmas

December 7 11:00 a.m.

Slide lecture followed by lunch and book signing. Lecture will discuss the history and heritage illustrated in her study of 17th, 18th and 19th century houses from Maryland to Texas, and from Kentucky to Florida. Reservations by November 30.

May We Have Your Attention Please !!

Many of you have probably heard about the city's concern and need to move the location of the General District Court and the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court. At present these courts are housed in the old 1837 Court House. Our concern is what will happen to the Old Court House. Remember the Clerk's office, the City Market, Russell's Drug Store, Numerous Houses, etc., etc., etc.!! Also, let's pay attention to where the Courts are to be relocated. Please voice your concerns to your Council Representative, your Mayor and members of the Architectural Review Board. Lee King, Assistant Director of Riddick's Folly, is chairman of the Review Board. The Old Nansemond County Court House, built in the Greek Revival Style in 1837, is one of Suffolk's Jewels. May it remain so!

"We Gather Together"

The Suffolk Museum, Riddick's Folly and The Suffolk Art League will present a joint exhibition titled "We Gather Together" at both museums December 8 - January 22. This exhibit will focus on the religious seasons and celebrations and will feature items, old and new, which are or were used in our area places of worship. The exhibition will also present items of historical significance to these churches.

The exhibit will open on Sunday, December 6 with a reception from 3 to 5. We invite those on the Candlelight Tour to include a stop at The Suffolk Museum, 118 Bosley Ave. and Riddick's Folly, 510 N. Main St.

For more information about this exhibition, contact Janet Crumpler at 925-6311 or Lisa Mizell at 934-1390

15th Annual Candlelight Tour

West End Tour

On Sunday afternoons in 1910 South Broad Street was a pretty busy place. Richardson Joyner was one of the little boys who joined their fathers to watch or participate in buggy races on that nice straight dirt track known as South Broad Street.

Excitement was produced with some regularity when Mr. John "Hurricane" Branch, the famous detective, came flying out of his driveway on that same street. He, along with his pack of bloodhounds, would be heading for the railroad station. He and the dogs were called all over the country to track criminals and solve crimes.

Now, when Frank Sheffer's parents called the fire department to put out the furnace fire at their home on Delaware Avenue in 1928, the truck got stuck in the mud of the unpaved street. Frank kept a pet goat for a while and Margaret Saunders (Dashiell) over on Virginia Avenue had a pony. There was still plenty of room for those pleasant pursuits. Broad Street marked the edge of the city and Lakeview Heights (now Lakeside) was in the county, more or less in the country, as well.

In 1905 Drs. J.E. Rawls and E.R. Hart bought two lots on the corner of Smith Street and Bosley Avenue and opened Lakeview Hospital. Eventually other doctors joined them and other buildings - an office building for the doctors and a dormitory for the nurses-were added, covering most of the block. Those doctors needed good homes nearby. (note: Lakeview Hospital closed when Louise Obici Memorial opened in 1951 and the old Lakeview Building was demolished)

Lakeview Heights was an up and coming area in the first two decades of this century. An advertisement in a 1920's newspaper touted the new development as the only one that could be reached from downtown without requiring the crossing of a bridge or railroad tracks.

By 1919 Mr. William S. Holland had bought a house at 107 South Broad Street and Mr. John P. Lee was working on or had completed one at 811 Gittings Street. They were substantial, four square houses, good homes. But then there was the Darden Place.

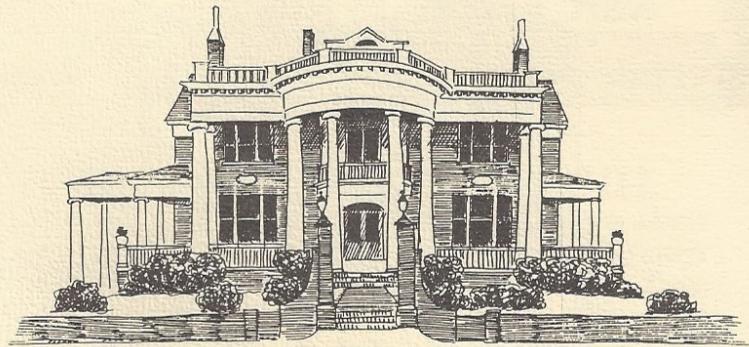
Mr. J.M. Darden had started acquiring land on South Broad Street in 1903. He had a plan for a house that would require more than one lot. (Mr. Darden, you see, had done very well, the concessionaire for the railroad.) Around 1913 he contracted with Mr. McMichael, a Charlotte, North Carolina architect, to have an important structure designed. He wanted a brick house of a size and style to befit his station in life. No doubt the mail was heavy for a while as ideas went to Charlotte and drawings were sent back to Suffolk. And a grand house began to grow.

Not long after that Mr. John Phillips and Lyn Denson started developing the land to the west nearer the lake. During the twenties several families (including the Sheffers and the Saunders) moved out to their new homes. They were not old fashioned ones like Mr. Holland's and Mr. Lee's but brick houses with an English look. Mr. Phillips had built a model at the corner of Maryland Avenue and Park Road (now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Story) to suggest what might be appropriate. Tom Cohoon chose that style for the house he built at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Park Road.

In time, more and more families moved to the West End and there was less room for ponies and goats. The name of the area changed from Lakeview Heights to Lakeside (with a garden club carrying the old name as our only reminder.) The streets were paved and cars replaced the buggies.

The trees that were seedlings in the days of Tom Cohoon, John Lee, and the others tower over the charming homes they left behind. The friendly neighbors and well kept properties make this one of the most popular neighborhoods in the City, though decades have passed since it was new. Come with us on December 5 & 6 to the West End of today. Three churches and four home will light the candles and open their doors to you.

The Darden - Sheffield Mansion (1914) 104 South Broad Street



The portico, with its soaring Corinthian columns, promises wonders to be found beyond the large double doors of this stately home. The promise is more than fulfilled by the grand staircase alone. The very fine examples of stained glass, the handsome woodwork, and the beautifully proportioned spaces are additional treats for the eye and the soul.

Built for Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Darden, the house was purchased from their family by Mrs. H. T. (Rosa) Sheffield in 1954. It was from Mrs. Sheffield's family that the new owners, Mr. and Mrs. T.J. Die, purchased the mansion this year.

Mr. and Mrs. Die are inveterate collectors- she, of porcelain objets d' art from the late nineteenth century, and he, of artifacts from ancient civilizations. They are still unpacking boxes filled with treasures.

(We hope you don't object to our use of the term mansion. Mr. and Mrs. Die think they have twenty-five rooms. We think the size of the place as well as the exceptional quality of design merit the term.)

The William S. Holland House (c. 1900) 107 South Broad Street

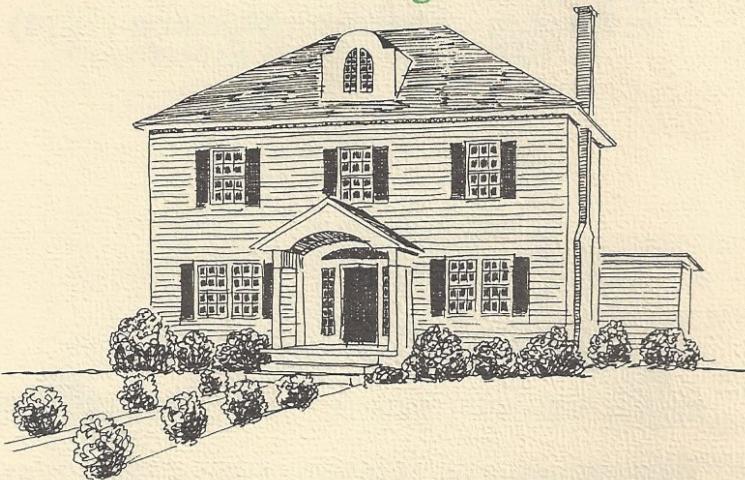


Although this house was probably built by Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Keeter, we name it for Mr. Holland because he and his family owned it for forty-seven years. That is far longer than the ownership of any of the other eight owners of the property in this century.

William Shakespeare Holland (we're told he was born with just a middle initial, S. then chose Shakespeare) was a lawyer and clerk of court in Suffolk. He must have been pleased to have a new house in the fashionable West End. It was a good house, unpretentious, but gracious.

While the house is somewhat mild mannered on the outside, its modern day interior is another story. Joe Riddick is the current owner and he is a man as skilled with paint and fabric as he is with hammer and saw. The product of his labor is a handsome interior sparked by fresh, bright colors and beautiful textiles. He's even working on Mrs. Holland's garden.

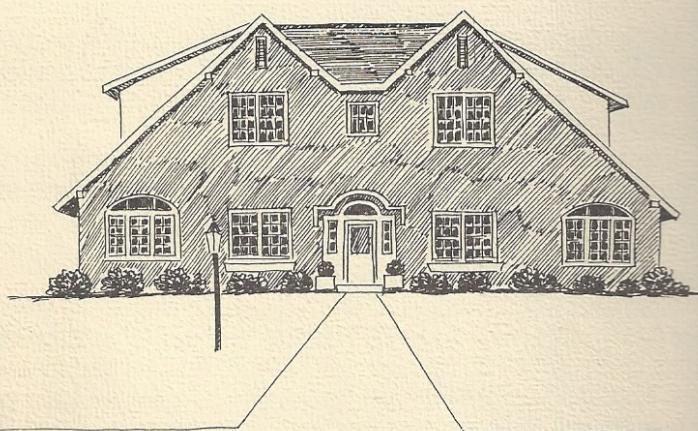
The John Lee House (c. 1920)
811 Gittings Street



Mr. John Lee purchased this land from Consolidated Realty in 1909 and built his house sometime thereafter. He and his family owned the property until 1956. The house was modified through the years by Mr. and Mrs. Lee, as well as by subsequent owners, to suit the changing needs of the inhabitants. The house has grown and accepted the changes gracefully. The current owners, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Wood, have furnished their home with lovely antiques and reproductions. These are enhanced by displays of the geisha girl porcelain that Mrs. Wood enjoys collecting as well as old family photographs and other memorabilia which lend an air of reverence for tradition.

The handsome house with its symmetrical facade and rather important doorway shows signs of a Georgian influence. The deep front yard and inviting entrance help to make this home an asset to the neighborhood and to our tour.

The Tom Cohoon House (c. 1922)
1005 Pennsylvania Avenue



We have given this house the name of the first owner, Tom Cohoon, even though he didn't live there very long before his death. The family that owned this house the longest was that of H.T. Sheffield (1929-1981). However, Mr. Sheffield's widow, Rosa, purchased another house in 1954, the Darden Mansion, and it was there that she lived out her days.

The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. David Snyder, have been collecting antique country furniture and wonderful curiosities for some years. While the accumulated treasures are wonderful in and of themselves, Mrs. Snyder's decorative painting - stenciling and tole painting among other forms - add even greater charm to the scene. Their flair for decorating has created room after room that would fit perfectly on the pages of *Colonial Homes*. Every nook and cranny holds a special treat for antique enthusiasts.

Happy 100th Birthday
Henry A. Rawles



Henry is a member of the SNHS and is a resident of Lakeside

Christmas Gifts Suggestions:

- Membership to SNHS
- \$10 individual or \$15 family
- Gifts from The Riddick's Folly Gift Shop for family & friends
- Wonderful Suffolk Historical Books written by SNHS members



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